**SOUTHWARK GOVERNORS’ ASSOCIATION MEETING**

**21 June 2018**

**Fred Metzgen - Southwark Schools’ Partnership Board**

The Chair outlined the structure, membership, rationale and remit of the recently formed Southwark Schools’ Partnership Board and explained the key, short and long term, aims and objectives of the board and identified priorities.

**Governors discussed in small groups what were the greatest challenges they faced, the biggest strengths of their governing bodies and how they could share good practice and work collaboratively with other schools in Southwark.**

**What they said:**

**The top 5 challenges we face**

**1. Falling numbers of pupils on school roll**

* falling rolls – planning for future to avoid vertical grouping
* Reputation – ensuring full entry at reception level; maintaining improving profile of the school

**2. Funding**

* Funding – managing tight budgets – fundraising issues – budget cuts and deficits – lack of money for arts

**3. SEND**

* Coping with rising SEND needs and rising members
* Schools unwilling to take on SEND children; funding for SEND deters schools from being inclusive
* Mental health issues (anorexia, self-harming, anxiety)

**4. Staff recruitment and retention**

* Recruiting in Peckham - reputation
* Recruitment and retention of teachers, NQTs, particularly in STEM subjects;
* planning/housing issues; key worker homes;
* Headteacher recruitment;
* Succession planning for senior leadership – leadership issues within school staff structure

**5. Standards**

* Using attainment/achievement data effectively
* Falling attainment of white working class girls; of boys; concerns about KS1/KS2 results
* Closing the gap, progress and attainment for PP against non-PP;
* Moderation of assessment;
* Falling standards in writing
* Resilience for SATs
* Implementation of curriculum with high levels of non English speaking children/children with ESL;
* Space for curriculum activities; managing behaviour; physical activity
* High rate of intake for the small space
* Poverty/obesity/safety – pastoral and health needs of children
* In term admissions
* Pace of changes in the curriculum, in the exam system

**Other:**

* Community/Parental engagement (improving but still an issue)
* Knife/gang crime
* Public/civic space – related to behaviour management
* Social media – misuse, unreal expectations, balance
* Massive change in GB make up
* Pupil mobility
* RI judgement twice and expecting Ofsted
* Maintaining old building
* Managing parents’ expectations

**The top 5 strengths of our Governing Body:**

**1. Commitment**

* Dedication and commitment to school and location; good community relationships; Strong community - local community/parental involvement
* Experience and good knowledge of the school and community; aware of problems
* Continuous monitoring of results/standards
* GB can help mould the school – new school
* Engaged chair

**2. Knowledge, experience and skills**

* Offering different skills sets to benefit the school;
* Ability to challenge
* Compliance with legislation/responsibilities
* Management of funding and budget

**3. Supportive leadership team and vice versa**

**4. Enthusiasm and belief in the school**

**5. Pushing for extra curricular activities and a balanced curriculum**

**6. Looking globally at the schools issues**

* New governance structure – United Learning overarching governance lead: new board = fresh thinking members; new GB members = new energy; opportunity to start again
* Recent experience of difficult times - a learning point

**How can our Governing Body contribute to sharing good practice and working collaboratively with other schools in Southwark?**

* Primary schools have access to secondary specialist space/facilities – science labs, sports areas, theatres etc.
* Formally agree and welcome sharing of staffing and sharing of cost
* Share specific practice especially SEND and G&T so recognising that some schools have more experience than others but all are responsible for securing appropriate attainment for all
* Collective ‘memorandum of agreement’ of all schools to owning Southwark’s children and so sharing resources to effect good outcomes for all
* Combined training
* Combined lesson moderation; sharing advice on best practice
* Shared finance provision
* Have experienced teachers between schools for promotions
* Balance NQTs and SEN for teaching staff across schools
* Use expertise of special schools to support more pupils with SEND in mainstream schools:
* Bring parents closer to school, use their skills and knowledge to improve school life for children and staff
* Workshops – meetings to support and teach parents, inspire them to inspire their children
* More volunteers to help with reading and writing
* Every member of staff should have autism awareness – more and more autistic children every year and not enough understanding, again bring in those parents with experience of autism to share with others
* Consider all teaching staff to have access to a child’s educational history and special needs
* More opportunities for governing bodies to share their good practice, eg committee meetings, structure, working parties etc